



expected materiality

Michael Betancourt

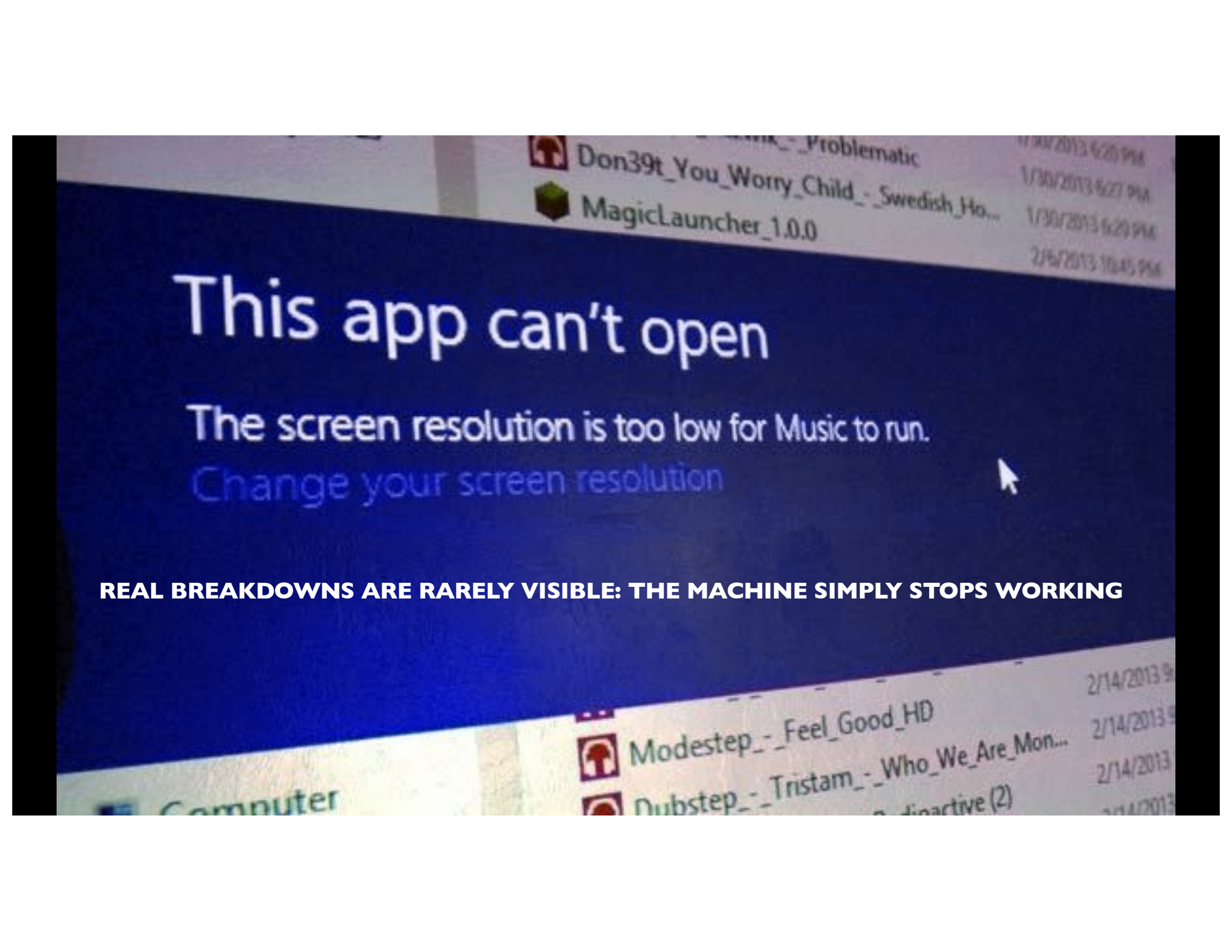
michael@michaelbetancourt.com | Instagram: @glitcharts
not.gli.t/ch — April 1, 2023



I write things.

I break things and play with the pieces; I realize this is an historically nihilistic action, but that is not my interest.

MATERIALITY is a product not of the material nature of the medium, but of the audience's acknowledgment of that medium as a substance that impacts their engagement with the content being presented by it.



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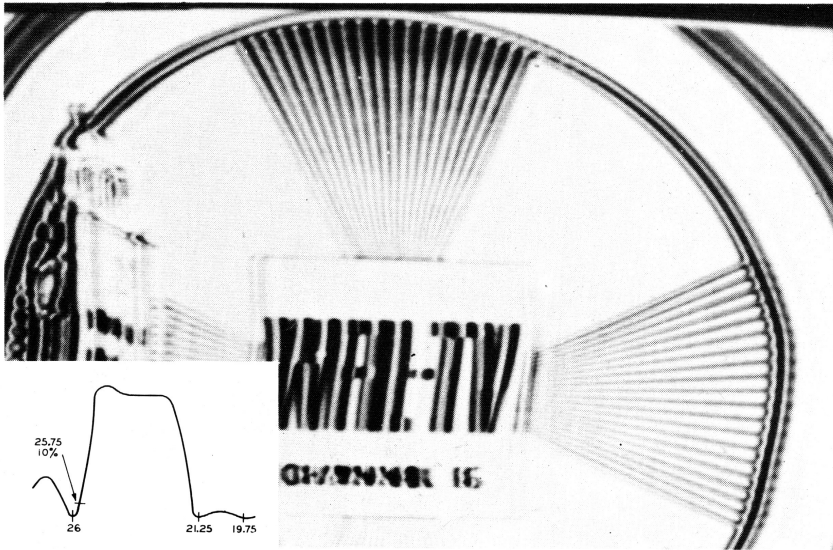
REAL BREAKDOWNS ARE RARELY VISIBLE: THE MACHINE SIMPLY STOPS WORKING



REAL BREAKDOWNS ARE RARELY VISIBLE: THE MACHINE SIMPLY STOPS WORKING

RCA Television PICT-Ⓢ-GUIDE

R-5g



Picture carrier at 10%. Poor low-frequency response indicated by weak horizontal wedge. Also causes poor sync, poor blanking, and poor signal-to-noise ratio. Read R-5 to R-5h.



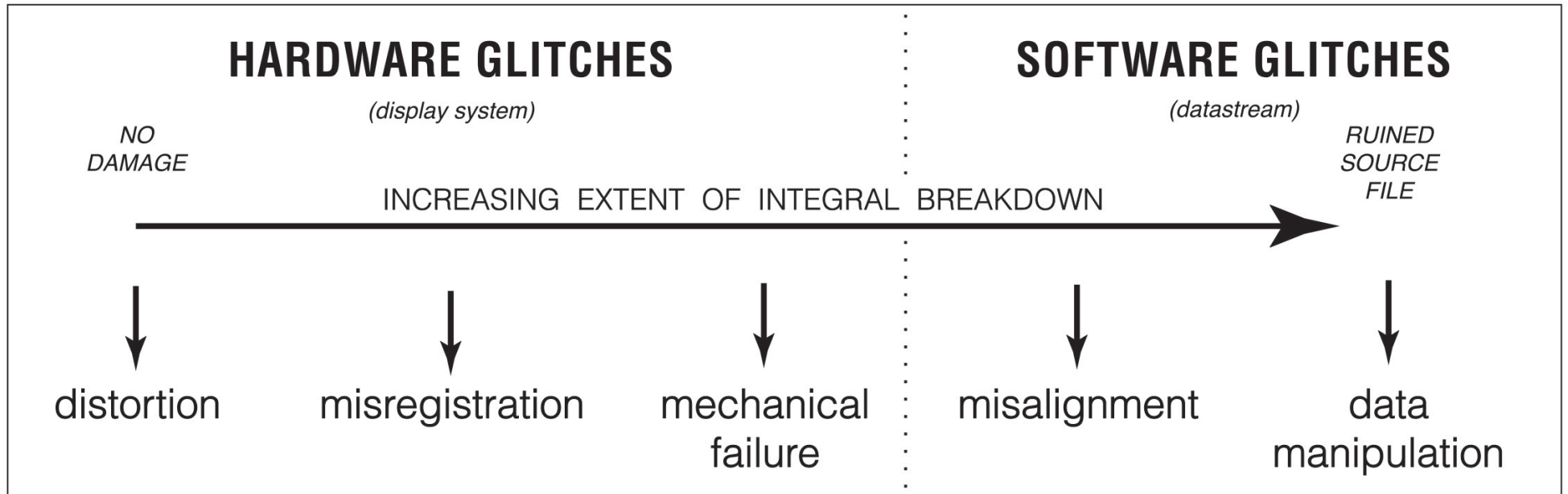
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DIAGNOSTIC RECOGNITION

The regularity of technical failures is what allows us to use the diagnostically to identify problems to correct.

This stability is also what allows their procedural creation and use in Glitch Art; it is what makes the expressive use of glitches possible.

However, when considered expressively, this ontological source in failures and breakdowns becomes irrelevant.



unique —————→ ***reproducible***



Jamie Fenton, Digital TV Dinner, 1978

The Outer Limits, ABC (1961)

GLITCH arises at the interface between the diagnostic concerns with the medium itself and the articulation of meaning—it describes the superposition of error/not-error created by our interpretations confronting an ambivalence they cannot resolve.

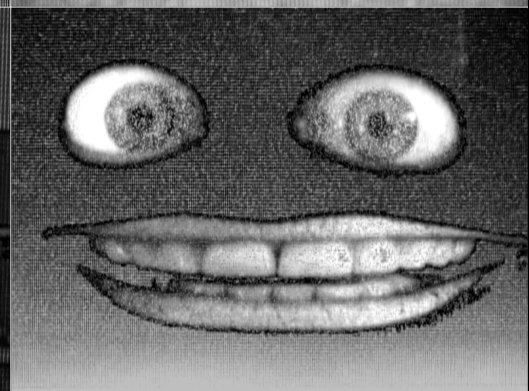
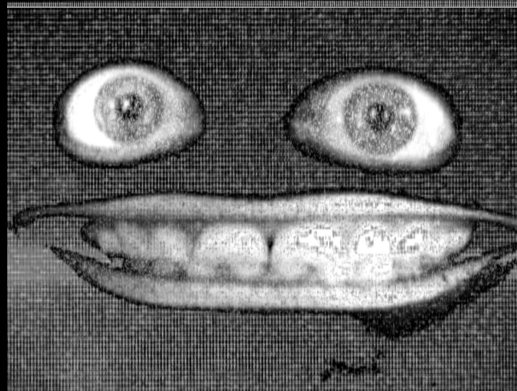
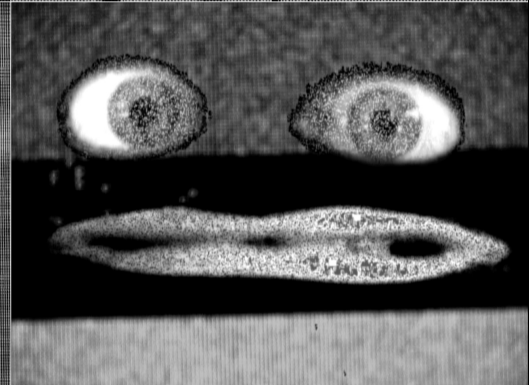
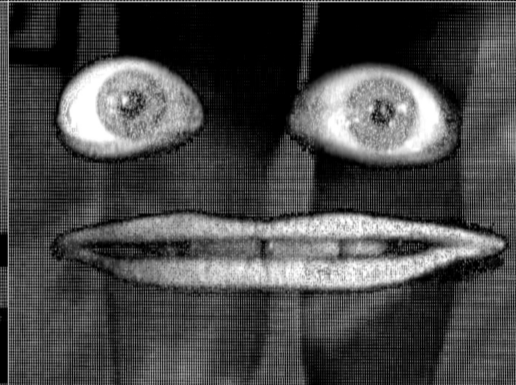
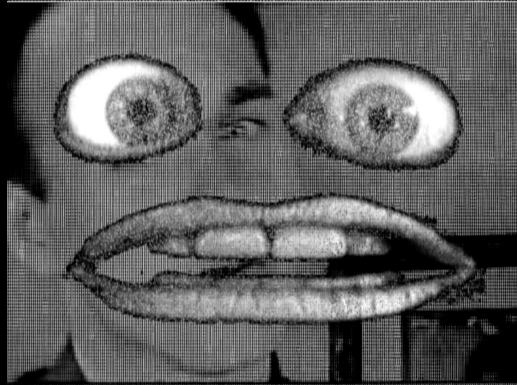
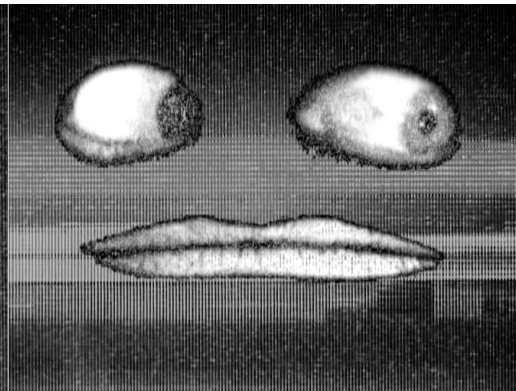
**DERIVATIVE
SIGN-FUNCTIONS**

**LEXICAL
FUNCTION**

**MATERIAL
FUNCTION**

SYMBOLIC
(denotation)

DIAGNOSTIC
(depiction)



The audience ignores what contains/supports the media: this 'invisible' physical support is seen through as an operative element of normal presentation—for–audience.

The term 'transparency' is apt: the medium “disappears” into the meaning it conveys.

Thus the concern with the content of media is only superficially a diagnostic engagement; to talk about content (meaning) is to engage media symbolically.

Glitches appear to confuse these relationships by seeming to demand their diagnostic recognition be part of their symbolic meaning: this is an illusion created by confusing the 'material function' for a diagnostic.

EXPECTATIONS ARE CENTRAL TO BOTH DIAGNOSTIC AND SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATIONS OF GLITCHES.



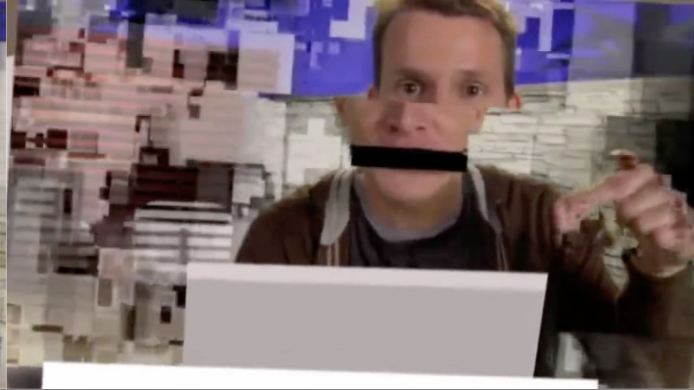
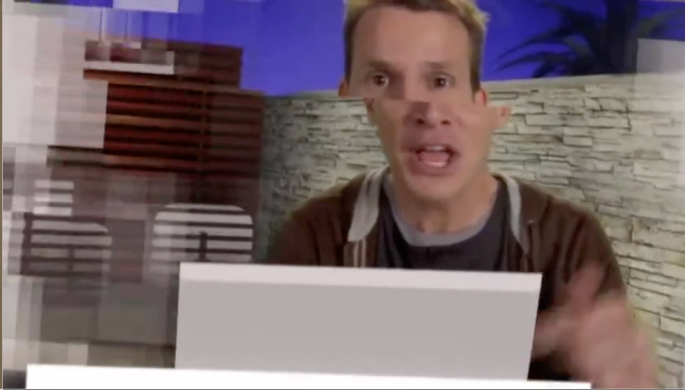
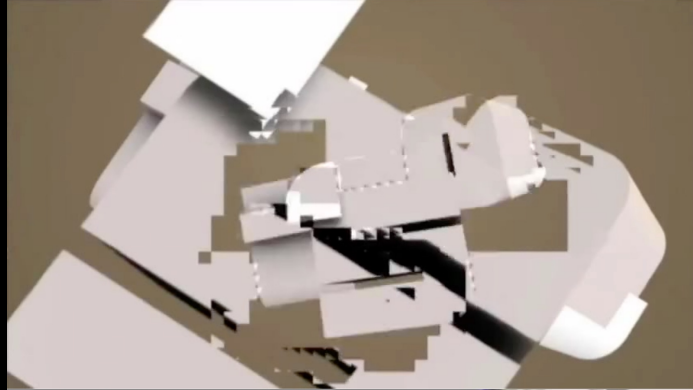
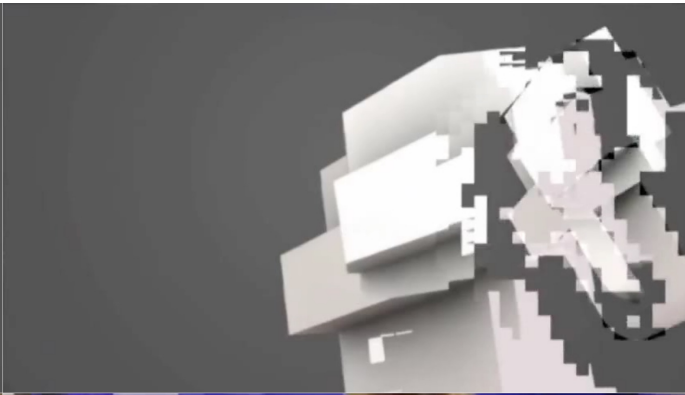
Gino Bonaventura, *The Fairground Futurist* (1924)



Because we expect old, damaged archival footage to look old and damaged in a specific way, it allows the semiotic use of these material markers for that damage to become an expression



Citizen Kane (1941)





Banksy, *Rebel rocket attack* (2013)

The development of apps, filters, and tools to generate these types of expression depend on their regularity and familiarity with how we expect glitches to look to produce their semiotic effects.

What that means is the expectations are guiding Glitch Art, thus rather than producing an unexpected rupture of how we anticipate the media will be, they become reassuring assertions of a familiar order: thus, they become 'transparent' parts of the articulation, neutralizing their disruptive potentials.

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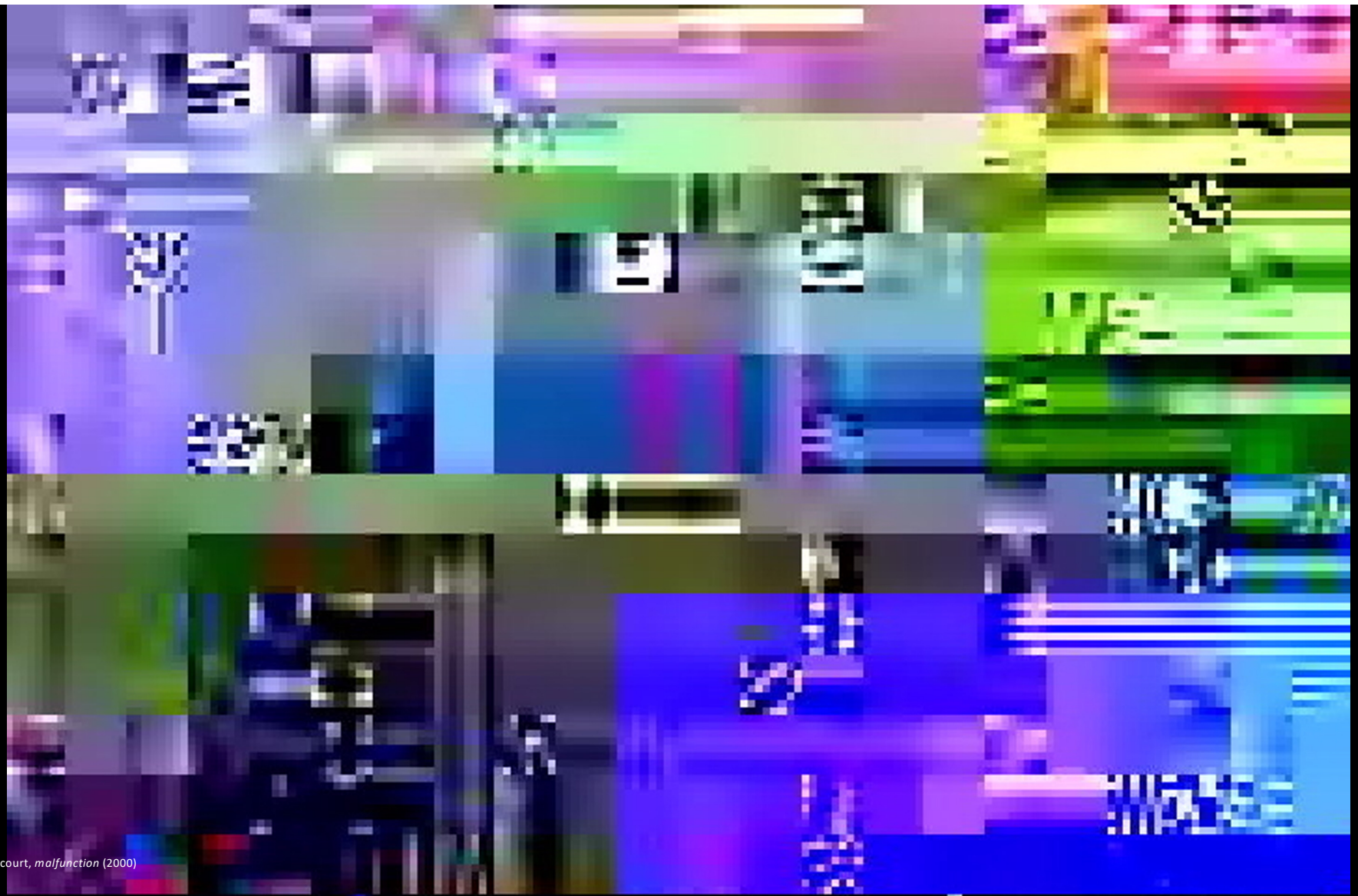
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What matters is not the un/reality of the glitch itself, but what we as audience will identify as a glitch.

The expectations about what glitches should “be like” defines the potential choices in advance.

Thus we are no longer in the realm of glitches (technical failure) but in the realm of semiotics where the glitch becomes a specific expressive element of media articulation, used precisely because of its capacity for a reflexive or *diagnostic* identification.

This development suggests that we are moving away from the disruptive understanding of glitch towards something that is more explicitly post–digital, where the digital medium is simply assumed and its programmatic / interruptable operations are now familiar.



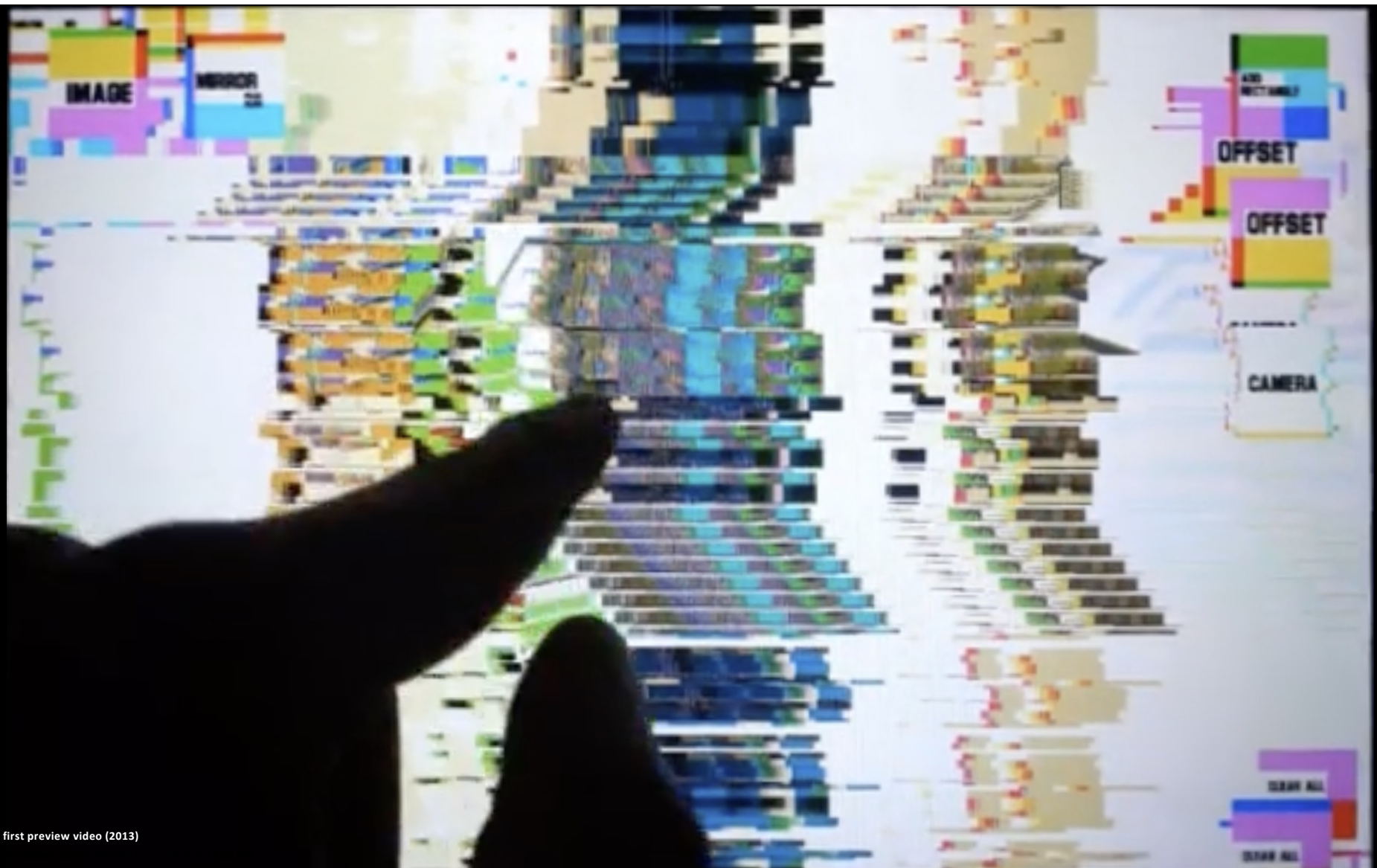
Michael Betancourt, *malfunction* (2000)



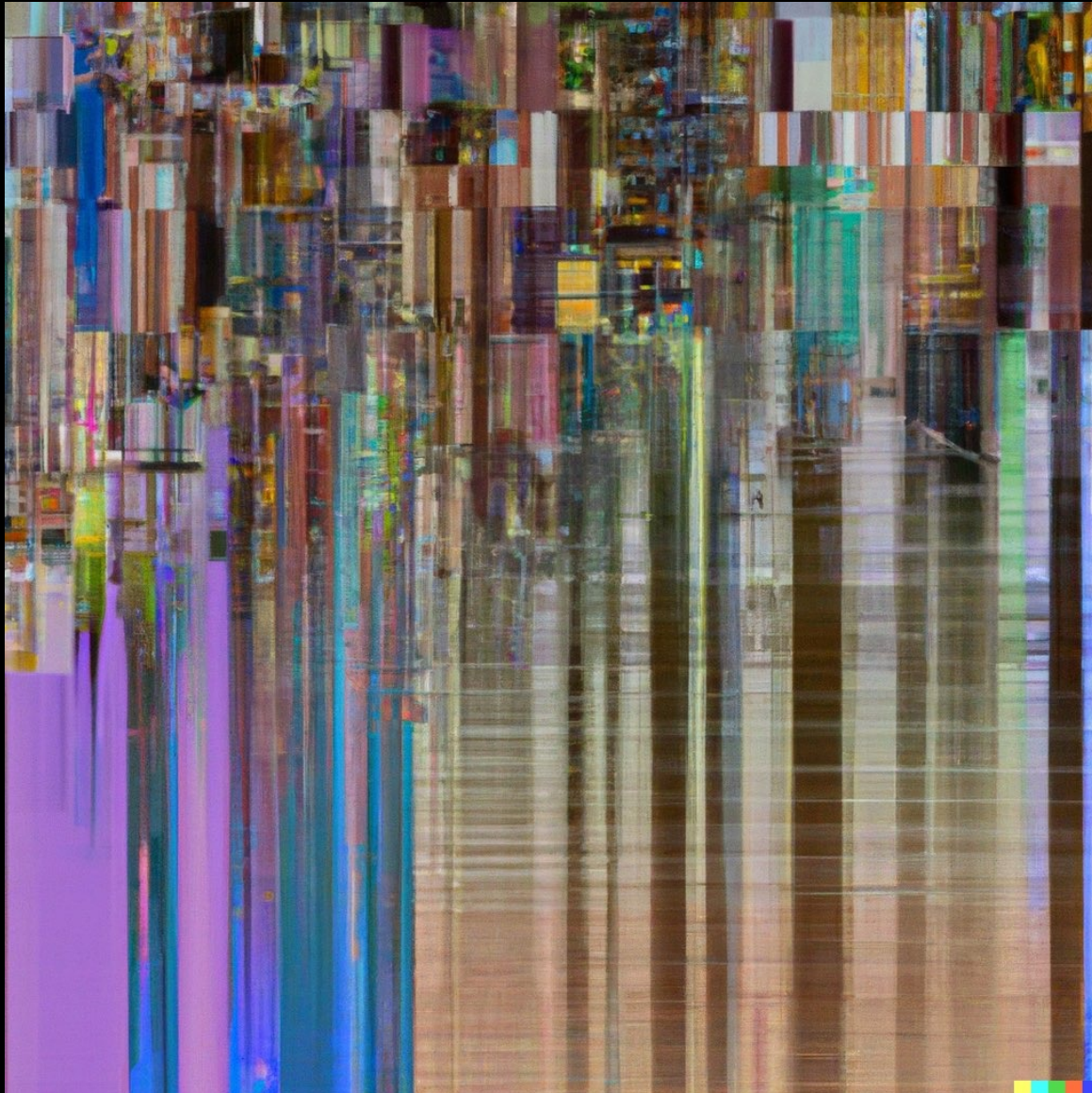


Glitch Art exploits these ambivalent diagnostic/symbolic identifications; this aspect of semic use differentiated Glitch Art from other uses of glitches in popular media, but also makes the increasing role of existing formal expectations for what glitches “should be like” in guiding our tools-that-generate-glitches a potential arena of concern since it may create a convergence with the glitches shown in popular media.

The capacity of AI to generate “glitches” makes these semiotic dimensions more, rather than less obvious, as it is a technology that makes the assumptions which guide our interpretations apparent.



touch.gl first preview video (2013)



Nick Birz, *AI Glitch-Alike* (2023)

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A fatal exception 0E has occurred at 0028:C0011E36 in UXD UMM(01) + 00010E36. The current application will be terminated.

- * Press any key to terminate the current application.
- * Press CTRL+ALT+DEL again to restart your computer. You will lose any unsaved information in all applications.

Press any key to continue _

thank you